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Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

As efforts intensify to meet the Millennium Development Goal target to halve the percentage of people who suffer from hunger by 2015, the international community has increasingly focused on addressing the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition. Guided by the aspirational vision of the Zero Hunger Challenge, many countries have renewed their efforts to eradicate poverty, empower smallholder farmers and rural women, increase access to food, address malnutrition, build resilience among the most vulnerable populations, sustainably increase agricultural productivity, adapt agriculture to climate change and its effects, reduce food losses and waste, and ensure adequate means of implementation. New global and regional alliances are forming around those issues and will serve to provide a strong foundation for a post-2015 development agenda that gives appropriate consideration to food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 68/233 on agriculture development, food security and nutrition, the General Assembly requested, among other things, that the Secretary-General report to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session on matters highlighted therein, including the commitment to support developing countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, to improve the lives of the poorest people, and to give appropriate consideration to agriculture development, food security and nutrition in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

2. The present report examines the progress made to date and the challenges that remain in achieving food security and nutrition, sustainably increasing agricultural production, and reducing agricultural losses and waste, in accordance with the Zero Hunger Challenge and international agreements, such as the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It also looks ahead on how to maintain momentum beyond the achievement of the 2015 targets through the incorporation of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture in the proposed sustainable development goals and their placement within a comprehensive post-2015 development agenda.

II. Overview

3. The number of people in the world who suffer from chronic hunger has fallen, from 868 million in 2010-2012 to 842 million people in 2011-2013. This constitutes a 17 per cent decrease since 1990. Still, one in eight people in the world today remains chronically undernourished.[1] Undernutrition includes stunting, wasting and underweight; it is the underlying cause in an estimated 45 per cent of all deaths among children under 5 years of age.

4. From 2000 to 2012, the global prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age declined from one in three to one in four — with the number of children affected falling from 197 million to 162 million, 90 per cent of them in Asia and Africa.[2]

5. In 2012, 51 million children under 5 years of age were wasted, and 17 million were severely wasted, prevalence rates of almost 8 per cent and just under 3 per cent, respectively. Approximately 71 per cent of all severely wasted children live in Asia and 28 per cent in Africa, with similar figures for wasted children, at 69 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively.[2] Those children are at substantial increased risk of severe acute malnutrition and death.

6. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), micronutrient deficiencies are an insidious form of malnutrition and are sometimes referred to as hidden hunger. Although hunger may be eliminated, deficiencies in micronutrients, such as iron, iodine or vitamin A, can persist, with serious consequences for maternal and child health. In developing countries, it is estimated that half of all pregnant woman and about 40 per cent of preschool children are anaemic. Iron

[1] *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*. United Nations, New York.

[2] United Nations Children's Fund-World Health Organization-World Bank. Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition (http://www.who.int/entity/nutgrowthdb/en/).

deficiency anaemia is often aggravated by worm infections, malaria and other infectious diseases, such as HIV and tuberculosis.

7. Among children under 5 years of age, the global trend in overweight prevalence — another form of malnutrition — rose from 5 per cent to 7 per cent, with the global burden increasing from 32 million to 44 million. The rise in overweight prevalence is reflected in all regions, while the absolute numbers are increasing in Africa, Asia and the developed countries but not in Latin America and Oceania.[2] The rapid rise in obesity and obesity-related chronic diseases coexisting with undernutrition has been called the "double burden" of malnutrition.

8. While developing regions as a whole have registered significant progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal hunger target, 33 countries, 26 in Africa and 7 in Asia, remain in need of external assistance for food owing to conflict, crop failures and high domestic food prices, or a combination of those factors.[3] Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment with modest progress in recent years, although food insecurity has risen sharply in parts of Africa during the first half of 2014 owing to increased conflict, civil unrest and displacement.[4] Adverse weather conditions and an escalation of conflicts have had a negative impact on crop production and food security in Western Asia, while Southern Asia and Northern Africa are progressing slowly. Significant reductions in both the number of people who are undernourished and the prevalence of undernourishment have occurred in most countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, as well as in Latin America.[3]

9. In contrast to 2012, during which agricultural commodities were affected by adverse weather conditions, 2013 saw an overall rise in global production of most agricultural commodities. Production increases were particularly pronounced for cereals, which rose to record levels as a result of good growing conditions in producing countries. Global production of oilseed is setting a new record in 2013-14. Significant surplus production of vegetable meal, vegetable oil and sugar cane has allowed countries to rebuild stocks and increase trading activities. International prices of most crops have fallen, largely in response to positive supply. World ethanol and biodiesel prices continued their declines from the historical peak levels they had reached in 2011, in a context of ample supply for both.[5]

10. In contrast, meat and dairy product prices are at historically high levels, primarily because their supply fell short of expectations in 2013, and global demand continues to rise. Increasing urbanization is a major driving force influencing global demand for livestock products; it stimulates improvements in infrastructure, including cold chains, which permit trade in perishable goods. Compared with the less diversified diets of rural communities, city dwellers have a varied diet that is rich in animal proteins and fats, and is characterized by higher consumption of meat and poultry and milk and other dairy products.[6]

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[3] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Food Programme, 2013, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013: The multiple dimensions of food security* (Rome, 2013).

[4] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture, *Crop Prospects and Food Situation*, No. 2, July 2014.

[5] *OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2014*, OECD Publishing (http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/agr_outlook-2014-en).

[6] WHO, 2014 (http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/3_foodconsumption/en/index4.html).

11. The combination of global population growth, urbanization, increased levels of development, higher living standards, and rising income are also key drivers of the increase in the demand for fish and seafood and in the development of fisheries. Demand has been rising in both the developed and developing world at more than 2.5 per cent per year since 1950, and demand is likely to continue rising.[7] Moreover, the natural resource base for agriculture continues to decline, and the Millennium Development Goal on ensuring environmental sustainability has not been achieved.

III. Progress in eradicating hunger and malnutrition and providing access to food

12. Progress in eradicating hunger is measured against two globally agreed targets: the 1996 World Food Summit target aims to halve the number of hungry people by 2015, while the Millennium Development Goal target set in 2001 aims to halve the proportion of hungry people by 2015. While achieving the World Food Summit target at the global level is likely out of reach, many individual countries are on track to meet it, and the Millennium Development Goal target remains within reach globally if actions are stepped up and progress continues to improve.[3]

13. Yet in focusing on kilocalories and underweight only, neither of those targets captured the different dimensions of undernutrition, particularly stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies. Current estimates show that, in absolute numbers, there are more stunted children in Africa than 20 years ago.[8] Moreover, stunting is thought to have a greater impact than hunger on eventual economic and social outcomes (e.g., loss of gross domestic product (GDP), higher lifelong burden on health systems). A recent study on the costs of hunger in Africa estimates the incremental social and economic cost of stunting to be between 1.9 and 16.5 per cent of GDP,[9] thus underlining the importance of addressing stunting as a priority in the post-2015 agenda.

A. The Zero Hunger Challenge

14. The Zero Hunger Challenge, which was launched in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, provides a compelling vision for the global eradication of hunger with a concise understanding of how to achieve it. The five pillars of the Zero Hunger Challenge — 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round; zero stunted children under age 2; all food systems are sustainable; 100 per cent increase in smallholder productivity and income; and zero loss or waste of food — capture the interlinked dimensions of the holistic and multidimensional approach necessary to tackle the challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition. The Challenge provides a useful framework for governments' national

[7] High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, *Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition* (Rome, June 2014).

[8] UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (UNICEF, New York; WHO, Geneva; The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2012).

[9] The Cost of Hunger Study in Africa is a multi-country study aimed at estimating the economic and social impacts of child undernutrition in Africa. It is led by the African Union Commission and the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and is supported by the Economic Commission for Africa and WFP.

plans to address hunger and its underlying causes and for coordination by United Nations organizations in support of those plans.[3]

15. Actions are currently under way in more than 30 countries, within regional organizations, and globally. Recent efforts have focused on three main areas: accelerating progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goal target on hunger by 2015; ensuring that food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture remain high on the list of goals and targets in the post-2015 development agenda; and doing more to enable farmers — in particular women farmers — to adapt to the effects of climate change.

B. Committee on World Food Security

16. The Committee on World Food Security is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform on agriculture, food security and nutrition issues. During its fortieth session, held in October 2013 in Rome, the Committee welcomed the work of the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security and its reports on Biofuels and Food Security[10] and Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security.[11] The Committee produced recommendations on enhancing policy coherence for food security and biofuels, promoting research and development on biofuels and food security, and linking energy with food security, and additional policy recommendations on supporting investments in smallholder agriculture. Those recommendations were also offered as input to the ongoing consultations of the Committee on the principles for responsible agricultural investments.

17. The Committee on World Food Security also officially endorsed the commencement of work to facilitate country-initiated multi-stakeholder assessments on sustainable food production, food security and nutrition as mandated by the outcome document of the Conference on Sustainable Development.[12] The facilitation of such assessments is in line with the Committee's core mission of facilitating support and advising countries on the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their nationally and regionally owned plans of action for the elimination of hunger and the achievement of food security and nutrition.[13]

18. In 2013, the Committee on World Food Security launched a consultative process to develop and ensure broad ownership of an Agenda for Action for Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises. Protracted crisis situations that present severe levels of food insecurity are recognized to be a special category requiring a broad set of related policy and operational responses. The Committee is also negotiating the establishment of Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments. The principles are expected to promote investments in agriculture that contribute to food security and nutrition and that support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

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[10] High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, the Committee on World Food Security (Rome, 2013).

[11] Ibid.

[12] Resolution 66/288, annex, para. 115.

[13] Available from http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs0910/ReformDoc/CFS_2009_2_Rev_2_E_K7197.pdf.

19. In 2013 the Committee on World Food Security developed a second version of its Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, a living document whose purpose is to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders. The framework consolidates relevant recommendations adopted by the Committee plenary and takes into account other existing frameworks, guidelines and coordination processes at all levels. In line with the mandate of the Committee plenary, the framework draws on a number of earlier frameworks and is intended to complement them and ensure coherence among them. In particular, it draws upon the World Food Summit Plan of Action and the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, the Final Declaration of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

20. Other documents that have contributed to preparation of the framework include the United Nations Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action, the Group of Eight L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development,[14] the Scaling Up Nutrition Framework and Road map and the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. In addition to global frameworks, a number of regional frameworks, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, have also contributed.

21. The main added value of the global strategic framework is to provide an overarching framework and a single reference document with practical guidance on core recommendations for food security and nutrition strategies, policies and actions validated by the wide ownership, participation and consultation afforded by the Committee on World Food Security. As a dynamic instrument, it will be updated annually to incorporate decisions and recommendations adopted by the Committee plenary.

C. Scaling up nutrition

22. The Scaling Up Nutrition Movement is a renewed effort to eliminate all forms of malnutrition, based on the principle that everyone has a right to food and good nutrition. The movement brings together governments, civil society, the United Nations system, donors, businesses and scientists in a collective action to improve nutrition in countries where it is most needed. As of July 2014, 53 countries have committed to scaling up nutrition.[15]

23. By participating in the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, countries are working together to establish and advance new, transformative ways of working. Within their national development programmes, they are focused on effective implementation of both specific actions for nutrition and nutrition-sensitive strategies, including encouraging exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age and continued breastfeeding together with appropriate and nutritious food up to 2 years of age and beyond; enabling access to nutrients through incorporating them into foods;

[14] Available from http://www.unep.org/dewa/agassessment/index.html.

[15] Available from http://scalingupnutrition.org.

micronutrient supplementation through direct provision of extra nutrients; and enabling people with moderate and severe malnutrition to access effective treatment. In addition, the movement has made progress in incorporating strategies that link nutrition to agriculture, clean water, sanitation, education, employment, social protection, health care and support for resilience.

D. Increasing cooperation

24. It is widely agreed that increased collaboration and coordination are necessary to speed up the implementation of agreed goals and targets on hunger and food security. Organizations of the United Nations system have been increasingly working together through various collaborative bodies to consult regularly, share knowledge and streamline agendas to avoid duplication and support joint efforts.

25. FAO, IFAD and WFP are also working closely with the Committee on World Food Security and with other entities in the High-level Task Force for Global Food Security, to meet the Zero Hunger Challenge. In September 2013, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank reported new joint estimates of child malnutrition using available data up to 2012. An interactive dashboard presents the updated prevalence estimates and numbers affected for stunting, underweight, overweight, wasting and severe wasting by the different regional classification.[16]

26. The Second International Conference on Nutrition will be held in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014, jointly organized by FAO and WHO, in cooperation with other international organizations. The Conference will be a high-level ministerial conference that will propose a flexible policy framework to address today's major nutrition challenges and identify priorities for enhanced international cooperation on nutrition. A technical paper on "maximizing the contribution of fish to human nutrition" will be considered by the Conference, highlighting the important role that fish play in nutritional objectives.

27. While there are different dimensions of hunger and malnutrition, food security itself is also a complex condition. Its dimensions — availability, access, utilization and stability — are understood more completely by examining sets of indicators related to dietary quality, frequency of food consumption, infrastructure, water availability, access to land, price volatility and market access. Growth can raise incomes and reduce hunger, but higher economic growth may not reach everyone. While poverty eradication remains at the centre of the development agenda, growth and rising incomes do not necessarily correlate closely with improved food security and nutrition. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people living in extreme poverty was more than halved, while over the same period, the number of undernourished declined by only 17 per cent.[3]

28. Moreover, access to adequate food is equally important to the eradication of hunger as food production. There is sufficient capacity and resources in the world to ensure adequate food and good nutrition for everyone. Nevertheless, and in spite of progress made over the last two decades, an estimated 841 million people still suffer from chronic hunger.

[16] Available from http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/estimates2012/en/.

29. The problem of how to best address interlinked issues of hunger, nutrition, and food security requires a twin-track approach. The twin-track approach requires specific and urgent attention to both short- and longer-term interventions to address food insecurity and malnutrition. Short-term interventions include actions that are taken to ensure immediate access to adequate food for the most vulnerable. The long-term interventions build resilience and address the root causes of hunger. Both tracks need to be coordinated and simultaneous in order to successfully fight hunger and progressively realize the right to access adequate food.

30. WFP reports that, in 2013, 7.9 million people received a total of $506 million in assistance for resilience building in the form of cash, vouchers or a combination of the two, through 88 programmes in 52 countries, enabling local communities to procure food through local markets, increase access to food, and strengthen local food distribution systems through construction or repair of roads, bridges and wells.[17] This is one example of a solution that is aligned with the twin-track approach as it provides food assistance while building lasting resilience for enhanced food and nutrition security and it reduces vulnerability.

31. Long-term commitment to mainstreaming food security and nutrition in public policies and programmes is key to hunger reduction. Policies aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity sustainably, especially for smallholders, combined with social protection policies and programmes, will address food insecurity and malnutrition while ensuring that social benefits are derived from economic growth over the long term. Remittances, which have globally become three times larger than official development assistance, have had significant impacts on poverty and food security.

32. A recent study compared 45 countries' performance in the past year over 22 indicators on public spending, policies and programmes and legal frameworks; instruments that governments can employ to enhance food security and nutrition.[18] In those countries with high and/or growing hunger and undernutrition prevalence, some clearly show greater political commitment to address those problems. However, a commitment to tackle hunger does not correlate to an equal commitment to address undernutrition. The study also found extreme variation in relative commitment levels among countries with high levels of stunting, and in countries where stunting has increased over the past two decades, current levels of political commitment are either low or very low. Many countries in this position are currently being or have recently been affected by conflict.

33. School feeding programmes are social safety nets that are effective at reducing hunger; school meals act as income transfers for the household as they help families to educate their children and protect their food security in times of crisis. A recent report produced by WFP[19] assessed school feeding programmes throughout the world — the first such assessment carried out on a global scale — and noted that at least 368 million pre-primary-, primary- and secondary-school children receive food through schools around the world, based on a sample of 169 countries. Given the information available about the number of children receiving school meals and the

[17] *World Food Programme Achievements in 2013*, Rome, 2013.

[18] Dolf J. H. Te Lintelo, Lawrence J. Haddad, Rajith Lakshman, Karine Gatellier. The Hunger And Nutrition Commitment Index (Hanci 2013): Measuring The Political Commitment To Reduce Hunger And Undernutrition In Developing Countries. Institute of Development Studies, 2014.

[19] World Food Programme, *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013*, Rome, 2013.

current knowledge of the per capita cost of school feeding, the report estimated that there is a global yearly investment of between $47 billion and $75 billion — most of which is from government budgets.

34. In high- and middle-income countries, school feeding is often integrated into broader social welfare systems. By contrast, coverage of school feeding programmes is the least adequate in developing countries with the greatest need. Current estimates suggest that while nearly 50 per cent of schoolchildren receive free meals in middle-income countries, the figure for low-income countries is 18 per cent.[20] This highlights the challenge for low-income countries to ensure similar institutionalization, sustainability and efficiency of school feeding programmes in the face of limited resources and capacities.

35. Despite some economic progress, Africa remains the world's most food insecure continent, with relatively low levels of agricultural productivity, low rural incomes, and high rates of malnutrition. Yet while the majority of countries in need of food assistance are in the African region, India — the world's second most populous country — has the highest absolute number of food-insecure people; 25 per cent of the world's hungry live in India. The country's newly ratified National Food Security Act is the largest right to food programme of its kind: it extends coverage of the country's Targeted Public Distribution System, allocating rations of subsidized cereals (about 90 per cent below retail price) through a network of fair price shops to more than 800 million people, or two thirds of the country's population. Implementation of the National Food Security Act on this scale will be a major challenge.

IV. Progress in sustainably increasing agricultural productivity

36. It is widely agreed that in order to avert future food crises, agricultural productivity must be increased in ways that are sustainable, resilient and conducive to rural development and poverty reduction. While the world's cultivated land areas have grown by 12 per cent over the past 50 years, agricultural production has roughly tripled owing to significant increases in the yields of major crops. Presently, on a global scale, the production per capita is about 4,600 calories, or double the actual need.[21] Increased production in some regions of the world is associated with degradation of land and water resources and the deterioration of related ecosystems, including biodiversity, biomass, carbon storage, soil health, water storage and supply. Much of the agricultural expansion has been at the expense of forests: between 2000 and 2010, 13 million hectares of forests were lost each year through conversion to other land uses. However, forests are crucial for sustainable agriculture as they protect soils, regulate water flows, serve as gene pools and maintain a healthy climate. As a result, agriculture productivity growth is slowing down in many parts of the world.[22]

37. OECD-FAO predicts that global agricultural production will grow at an average of 1.5 per cent annually over the next 10 years, compared with 2.1 per cent

[20] Ibid.

[21] Jo Lundqvist, C. de Fraiture and D. Molden, *Saving Water: From Field to Fork — Curbing Losses and Wastage in the Food Chain*. Policy Brief. Stockholm International Water Institute, 2008.

[22] P. Kumar and S. Mittal (2006), "Agricultural Productivity Trends in India: Sustainability Issues", *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, Vol. 19 (Conference Number), pp. 71-88.

in the previous decade. Global cereal production is expected to increase by 1.4 per cent per year in the next decade, with 57 per cent of total growth coming from middle-income and low-income countries. Growth is expected to be slower in all crop sectors and in livestock production. These trends reflect rising costs, growing resource constraints and increasing environmental pressures, which are expected to inhibit supply response in virtually all regions.

38. Agricultural knowledge, science and technology has contributed to substantial increases in agricultural production over time. Increases in productivity have contributed to a net increase in global food availability per person and general food security. However, people have benefited unevenly from those yield increases across regions and negative impacts on environmental sustainability have been experienced.[23] This situation and the relatively low food prices in industrial countries have led to significant pre- and post-retail wastage, increasing the pressure on already strained natural resources. Sustaining agricultural productivity in the long run to meet the food security needs of future generations will require design and adoption of ecologically and socially sustainable agriculture and food systems at the global, national and local levels, including better targeted investments in, legal frameworks and forms of association that provide secure access to knowledge, information, credit, markets, land and water for individuals and communities with modest resources, and support to climate-adapted agricultural practices (see report of the Secretary-General on agricultural technology for development (A/68/308)). Furthermore, better land use planning is needed to halt the degradation of the natural resource base for agriculture, especially loss of forest resources.

A. Support for smallholder farmers

39. To realize the full potential of smallholder agriculture, there is a need to remove the constraints that limit its investment capacity. The first objective is to support investments by smallholders themselves, but their capacity to do so depends on other related investments in collective action, in public goods and supportive rural infrastructure.[24]

40. To be more effective, policies need to be integrated in the sense that each policy should support (rather than hinder) the other. For example, investments in appropriate research and extension will not necessarily lead to smallholder income improvements unless investments are also made in accessing and creating new markets. Similarly, investments in infrastructure work better if they support the models of production and markets that are appropriate to smallholders and, furthermore, these investments would need to be bolstered by measures to secure tenure rights.[25]

41. At its sixty-sixth session, the General Assembly declared 2014 the International Year of Family Farming, and invited FAO to facilitate its implementation. The international year was officially launched on 22 November 2013 at United Nations Headquarters, and events included five regional dialogues that engaged family farmers

[23] International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, Summary for Decision Makers of the Global Report (2009).

[24] High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, *Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security* (Rome, 2013).

[25] Ibid.

and representatives from governments, the scientific community, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The dialogues aimed to identify the main challenges and opportunities for family farming in each region, and the main tenets of an enabling policy environment for family farming as a central component for achieving food and nutrition security, and effectively eradicating hunger and rural poverty. At the request of the International Steering Committee of the International Year of Family Farming, the 2014 FAO regional conferences provided forums for constructive dialogue among those stakeholders, and further defined the scope of the work and priorities of FAO in support of family farming at the regional level.

42. The African Union in turn declared 2014 as their Year of Agriculture and Food Security, marking the tenth anniversary of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. This has highlighted both the sustained growth of Africa's economies and the need to refresh the programme towards greater results and impact. Ten years later, only eight countries — Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Niger and Senegal — have reached or exceeded the 10 per cent spending target agreed in the Maputo Declaration, and nine — Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Congo-Brazzaville, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania — have achieved agricultural growth of more than 6 per cent per annum.

43. The twenty-eighth session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held in March 2014, produced assessments of the lessons learned by African governments, the African Union Commission and NEPAD, and Africa's development partners from the past decade of experience, and discussed recommendations in four key areas: identifying and agreeing on an African-led policy coherence, coordination and implementation agenda; providing the enabling environment for investment by the domestic private sector, including smallholder and family farmers; investing in a home-grown science, technology and learning agenda that is responsive to the needs and goals of smallholder farmers; and determining how the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme can more effectively contribute to building systemic capacity for results-oriented action and implementation.

44. Family farmers produce at least 56 per cent of all agricultural production worldwide,[26] and smallholder farmers are producing at least 80 per cent of all food consumed in Africa's food markets. With supportive, stable policies and greater participation in policy processes, smallholder farmers have demonstrated that they can respond positively to policy and market opportunities.[27] For example, WFP launched its Purchase for Progress pilot programme in 2008, and within five years has engaged in over 500 partnerships, 286 of which were formalized through agreements and 63 of which are under negotiation, to provide smallholder farmers in 20 pilot countries[28] with greater incentives to invest in boosting their production, with the possibility to sell to a reliable buyer and receive a fair price for their crops.

[26] FAO, 2014. Family Farmers: Feeding the world, caring for the earth. Infographic. http://www.fao.org/resources/infographics/infographics-details/en/c/230925/.

[27] FAO, 2014. *State of Food and Agriculture in the Africa Region and Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Implementation with a Specific Focus on Smallholder Farmers and Family Farming*. Africa Regional Conference, March 2014. ARC/14/3.

[28] Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia.

Approximately 400,000 metric tons of food have been contracted through the Purchase for Progress project, with $150 million generated for smallholder farmers.

45. Through the Purchase for Progress programme, WFP also tests innovative ways to buy staple food and promote marketing opportunities for smallholder farmers. The Purchase for Progress project leverages the demand of WFP, and with the expertise and resources of partners it supports smallholder farmers to achieve better yields, reduce their losses after the harvest, and improve the quality of their staple crops. Moreover, the Purchase for Progress programme gathers and shares lessons on effective approaches to connect smallholder farmers to markets in a sustainable way and share them widely with stakeholders. The programme also invests in capacity-building at the country level, in areas such as post-harvest handling and storage, which will yield sustainable results in boosting national food security over the long term. Following the leadership of WFP, it is hoped that other buyers of staple commodities, including governments and the private sector, will also increasingly be able to buy from smallholders.

B. Increasing resilience

46. Climate change acts as a multiplier of existing threats to food security, hunger and malnutrition. It will make natural disasters more frequent and intense, fertile land and water more scarce and difficult to access, and increases in agricultural productivity even harder to achieve. This could potentially intensify conflicts over scarcer resources, precipitating humanitarian crises, migration and displacement. Government ownership and leadership are key for any sustainable efforts aimed at enhancing food production, improving food access, scaling up social protection systems and implementing community-based adaptation programmes that build resilience against climate hazards and improve disaster preparedness and response. WFP is engaged in climate change adaptation and risk reduction in developing countries with high levels of food insecurity, while FAO is engaged in the action areas related to climate-resilient agriculture and deforestation, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is considering the concept of a land-degradation neutral world, based on the respective decision of the Conference on Sustainable Development to strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world.

47. In June 2014, the FAO Committee on Forestry invited countries to work actively towards achieving zero illegal deforestation, in the framework of developing sustainable and more integrated land use policies and to step up efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to invest in afforestation, reforestation and forest restoration. The United Nations Programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD), a collaborative initiative by FAO, UNEP and UNDP in developing countries, supports national REDD readiness efforts in 53 partner countries, spanning Africa, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America.

48. In 2014, the Climate Summit on 23 September will serve as a public platform for leaders at the highest level to catalyse ambitious action on the ground to reduce emissions and strengthen climate resilience; and to mobilize political will for an ambitious global agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by 2015. "Action Areas", or multi-partner initiatives, will be launched at the Summit, including through a new Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture. Every effort must be made to ensure that the Alliance promotes

inclusion of all relevant stakeholders and abides by multi-stakeholder national assessments.

49. The World Economic Forum's *New Vision for Agriculture* [29] involves 33 companies and 14 countries in transformative partnerships for food systems, reaching 2.8 million smallholder farmers. The concept of climate-smart agriculture will be discussed during the upcoming meetings of Grow Africa,[30] a partnership platform supporting the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, and Grow Asia, a similar multi-stakeholder platform that supports regional food security and sustainable agriculture.

50. In order to end hunger and enhance resilience building, a stronger commitment from governments in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2 (post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction) is needed to integrate disaster risk reduction in the development and investments plans of the food and agricultural sectors as well as in rural infrastructure and in education. Climate change adaptation strategies relevant to food security and nutrition should also be mainstreamed into all aquaculture and fisheries policies and actions at national and subnational levels, including by linking them to climate and weather research and prediction, developing specific studies and introducing, where needed, flexibility in management and governance mechanisms.[7]

V. Progress in ensuring that all food systems are sustainable

51. A world free from poverty, hunger and malnutrition cannot be achieved without a shift to resilient, diverse and productive agriculture and food systems, including sustainable natural resources management and reduction of food losses and waste along the value chain. A food system gathers all the elements and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socioeconomic and environmental outcomes in a systemic framework. A sustainable food system is one that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised,[31] but enhanced.[32]

52. In March 2014, the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production approved a proposal from FAO and UNEP for a new programme on sustainable food systems. The proposal builds on the existing work of the FAO-UNEP sustainable food systems programme established in 2011 and of the Agri-food Task Force on Sustainable Consumption and Production, and is expected to be launched in May 2015. The goal of the new programme is "to protect natural resources and promote a more efficient use of natural resources, products and recovered materials based on a solid scientific and policy knowledge base, by improving resource efficiency and reducing the pollution intensity of food systems, all along food chains, from production to consumption, while improving food and nutrition security".

[29] Available from http://www.weforum.org/issues/agriculture-and-food-security#nva.

[30] Available from http://growafrica.com.

[31] High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, *Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems* (Rome 2014).

[32] Avoiding Future Famines: Strengthening the Ecological Foundation of Food Security through Sustainable Food Systems. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi.

53. Outcomes will be evaluated through metrics based on enhanced data collection, including on policy, regulatory and voluntary instruments, as well as on sustainability indicators and the number of active partnerships and projects developed as a result of the programme, with particular focus on developing countries.

A. Reducing losses and waste

54. Reduction of food losses and waste is frequently considered to be a promising path towards reducing hunger and increasing the sustainability of food systems. Given that many smallholder farmers in developing countries live on the verge of food insecurity, a reduction in food losses in those countries could have an immediate and significant impact on their livelihoods. According to FAO, if food losses and waste could be halved, the required increase of available food to feed the world population by 2050 would only need to be 25 per cent, and not 60 per cent as currently projected.[33] Considering its nature and causes, halving food losses and waste could be a feasible target based on technical, economic, environmental and social considerations.

55. A report released in June 2014 by the High-level Panel of Experts defines food losses and waste as "a decrease, at all stages of the food chain from harvest to consumption, in mass, of food that was originally intended for human consumption, regardless of the cause". The distinction is made between food losses, occurring before consumption level regardless of the cause, and food waste, occurring at consumption level regardless of the cause. The report also defines food quality loss or waste as the decrease of a quality attribute of food linked to the degradation of the product, at all stages of the food chain from harvest to consumption.[31]

56. The findings note that food losses and waste are consequences of the way food systems function — technically, culturally and economically. Food losses and waste are analysed with a triple perspective: a systemic perspective, a sustainability perspective — including the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability — and a food security and nutrition perspective, looking at how food losses and waste relate to the various dimensions of food security and nutrition.[31]

57. The High-level Panel of Experts recommends undertaking four parallel, mutually supportive tracks in an inclusive and participatory manner: improve data collection and knowledge sharing on food losses and waste; develop effective strategies to reduce food losses and waste, at the appropriate levels; take effective steps to reduce food losses and waste; and improve coordination of policies and strategies in order to reduce food losses and waste.

58. The Save Food Initiative, and its Think.Eat.Save Campaign, both launched in response to the Zero Hunger Challenge, are good examples of efforts to raise awareness among consumers and encourage dialogue on food losses among industry, research, politics and civil society. In December 2013, FAO, WFP and IFAD agreed to work together on a three-year project to address food losses in developing countries. The project focuses on reducing losses of grains and pulses, such as maize, rice, beans and cow peas, which are staple foods that play a significant role in global food security and have a major impact on the livelihoods

[33] Food Losses and Waste in Europe and Central Asia. Document ERC/14/3, FAO 2014 (available at http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/030/mj621e.pdf).

of millions of smallholder farmers. This joint initiative aims to share knowledge at the global level on the most effective ways to reduce post-harvest losses and help countries introduce policies and regulations to cut down on wastage at both national and regional levels.[34]

B. Food price volatility, trade and investment

59. Established at the request of the Group of 20, the Agricultural Market Information System is an inter-agency platform to enhance food market transparency and encourage coordination of policy action in response to market uncertainty. The System also undertakes research activities to better understand market developments and identify indicators to monitor market and policy conditions, and identifies and addresses knowledge gaps and technical needs in participating countries. The initiative includes five main outputs: information collection; research; capacity development; dissemination; and policy dialogue.

60. The activity of the Agricultural Market Information System has recently shifted from data collection and review to preparation of short-term forecasts for the 2013-14 marketing season. The "Agricultural Market Information System Market Monitor" has improved information dissemination, and progress has been made in the areas of policy indicators, research and analysis. For example, country case studies have investigated methodologies for improved feed estimation and analysed price transmission from global benchmarks to producer prices; follow-up research on food and energy linkages has explored possible biofuel indicators; and a global scoping report has compiled current knowledge on stocks estimation. In addition, activities in the five target countries receiving capacity development — Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Thailand and the Philippines — have gradually commenced.[35]

61. Responsible investments in agriculture are a top priority from the perspective of both donors and recipients. An inclusive consultation process known as Committee on World Food Security-Responsible Agricultural Investments was launched during the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on World Food Security to develop and ensure broad ownership of principles for responsible agricultural investments and is expected to produce a set of principles to promote investments in agriculture that contribute to sustainable and durable food security and nutrition. The final version of the principles will be adopted by the Committee in October this year.

62. In December 2013, agreement was reached on a small number of issues under negotiation in the long-running Doha Round of World Trade Organization (WTO) Negotiations. The set of issues, broadly known as the Bali package after the location of the ninth WTO Ministerial Conference during which the agreement was reached, comprised three main components, one of which related to the use of public procurement for food stockholding which can be used by developing countries in pursuit of food security objectives. The resulting Bali agreement, inter alia, establishes that, until a permanent solution is found, members shall refrain from challenging, through the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism, compliance of a

[34] *Developments in Forums of Importance for the Mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (CL 149/INF/4).

[35] *Agricultural Market Information System Progress and Activities October 2013 to May 2014*. Fifth Session of the Agricultural Market Information System Global Food Market Information Group (May 2014).

developing member with its obligations in relation to trade-distorting domestic support to traditional staple food crops through existing public stockholding programmes for food security purposes.[36]

63. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, now in its fifth year following its establishment by the Group of 20 in 2009, supports medium- and long-term interventions to ensure strong and stable policies and increased investment in agriculture in the most vulnerable countries. It picks up where emergency funding leaves off, and works with countries to develop in a sustainable way, so that they can be more resilient to climate, political, and market shocks in the future. It focuses on agricultural productivity growth, linking farmers to markets, and increased capacity and technical skills.

64. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme is country-led, supporting countries' priorities reflected in their national agriculture and food security investment plans, and provides a platform for coordinated donor financing around country programmes and sustainable private sector investment. It is divided into two distinct windows for financing: the public sector window assists strategic country-led or regional programmes that result from sector-wide country or regional consultations and planning exercises, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in Africa; and the private sector window is designed to provide long- and short-term loans, credit guarantees, and equity to support private sector activities for agricultural development and food security. $1.2 billion in financing has been received to date — $979.2 million to the public sector window and $238.3 million to the private sector window.[37]

65. As of March 2014, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme is funding projects in 10 countries,[38] where the majority of direct beneficiaries are women, and 15 projects include nutrition-related activities totalling about $100 million. The Programme expects to reach over 13 million beneficiaries, mainly smallholder farmers and their families. Early results are showing very promising impacts. In some countries, incomes have increased by up to 200 per cent for the project beneficiaries, yields have quadrupled, and access to basic services has improved with increased incomes.[39]

VI. Looking ahead: agriculture development, food security and nutrition in the post-2015 development agenda

66. Eliminating hunger, ensuring food security and adequate nutrition, and making agriculture and food systems sustainable will require a more integrated approach across many sectors. In July, the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals endorsed a proposal for a set of sustainable development goals, including an integrated and comprehensive vision on a proposed goal to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture". The goal includes five targets in support of the most

[36] The Bali Package — implications for trade and food security. FAO trade policy briefs, No. 16.
[37] Available from http://www.gafspfund.org/content/funding.
[38] Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Yemen.
[39] Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme Fact Sheet: Public and Private Sector Windows. March 2014.

vulnerable, such as women, infants, children, and small-scale food producers by ending hunger and malnutrition and ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round; access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment. Food losses and waste were also addressed under a goal on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with a target on halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reducing food losses along production and supply chains including post-harvest losses.[40]

67. In preparation for the negotiation phase of the post-2015 development agenda during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Assembly is convening a High-level Stock-taking Event during the sixty-eighth session to reflect upon the various post-2015 development-related processes which have occurred during this session with a view to providing Member States and other stakeholders with an opportunity to identify possible inputs to the synthesis report of the Secretary-General, to the work of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and, in particular, to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

68. There is an emerging consensus that food security in the post-2015 development agenda should be aligned with the Istanbul Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, which is designed to lift the poorest countries out of poverty. Agriculture, food security and rural development is one of eight priority areas for action. It calls for, inter alia, strengthening of food assistance and safety net programmes to address hunger and malnutrition, ensuring access to safe food and emergency food assistance in all least developed countries, the provision of safety nets for poor smallholder farmers, new investments in regional and national agricultural and fishery research and rural infrastructure, extension of better farming and fishing practices and innovative and sustainable technologies, as well as marketing advice, structured and effective finance and greater tenure security, including access to and control over land by women farmers. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has incorporated some of the most important priorities of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including targets on building capacity and ensuring means of implementation. Those could be carried forward into the post-2015 development agenda.

69. Targets on nutrition in the post-2015 development agenda should also take into account the 2012 World Health Assembly targets, which touch upon all dimensions of malnutrition: 40 per cent reduction in the number of stunted children under the age of 5 by 2025; 50 per cent reduction of anaemia in women of childbearing age by 2025; 30 per cent reduction of low birth weight by 2025; no increase in children who are overweight by 2025; increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in the first six months up to at least 50 per cent by 2025; and reducing and maintaining childhood wasting to less than 5 per cent.

70. The Open Working Group has also proposed goals and targets related to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems, which include halting biodiversity loss and deforestation. Maintaining the natural resource base for agriculture could be an integral component of the post-2015 development agenda.

[40] Available from http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html.

71. Meeting the target of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015 will require immediate additional efforts, especially in countries that have made little headway. Efforts to increase investment in sustainable agriculture, support smallholder farmers, and collaborate globally on reducing food losses and waste are increasing, with encouraging progress. It will be important in the post-2015 development agenda to have a coherent framework able to deliver near-term food security and nutrition while ensuring that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised.[41]

VII. Recommendations

72. **It is important that the post-2015 development agenda incorporate a headline goal, such as is currently contained in Goal Two of the Proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture". It could also include targets on halting the degradation of the natural resource base for sustainable agriculture.**

73. **Sustainable development goals and targets relating to agriculture and food security could prioritize ending hunger and malnutrition, address medium-term requirements for ensuring sustainability of food systems, and take into account the importance of maintaining the Earth's natural resources. In this regard, the latest findings of reports produced by the High-level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security can provide useful guidance.**[42]

74. **Countries must be enabled to determine their own food security strategies, which are nationally articulated and developed through consultation with all key stakeholders. The Committee on World Food Security is well positioned to provide appropriate advice and supporting tools, such as country-initiated multi-stakeholder assessments on sustainable food systems, food security and nutrition.**

75. **All indications are that future climate change will pose significant new challenges to food security in many countries. Governments will need to undertake research and make other investments to support the capacity of smallholder farmers to adapt.**

76. **Continued efforts will be needed to improve the food security and nutritional status of the poor, including through strengthened social protection and safety nets. Safety nets can support access to food in times of crisis, have the potential to accelerate progress in reducing undernutrition and can work, if properly designed, to create demand and stimulate production among smallholder farmers.**

[41] Available from http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-8_EN.pdf.

[42] Ibid.